



# The University of Texas System Cancer Center

M. D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute

Texas Medical Center • 6723 Bertner Avenue • Houston, Texas 77030

*Department of  
Cancer Prevention*

August 20, 1985

Harold E. Varmus, M. D.  
University of California, San Francisco  
School of Medicine  
Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology  
San Francisco, California 94143

Dear Dr. Varmus:

Thank you for your letter. Clearly the virus should not be called HTLV-III, LAV, or ARV, firstly because it has no relationship to HTLV-I or II and secondly, because the internecine strife connected with the French Vs American virus should be avoided in future if possible. I do not myself see any way of avoiding associating the virus with AIDS and simply to change the name, for instance, to "XYZ virus" really does not help since the clinician will then have to explain what that particular virus causes. Though the level of public hysteria associated with AIDS is extremely high at present, I think that unfortunately as everyone becomes more familiar with the disease this will tend to diminish and therefore there probably is a great deal to be said for calling the virus exactly what it is. I am not sure that there is anything to be gained by giving it the prefix "human" since there seems to be evidence that a disease very akin to AIDS at least can be caused by the virus in higher primates and that the virus may have originated in the African green monkey. I would myself be in favor of something short and fairly explicit such as AIDS associated virus or simply AIDS virus since I believe that there is no way of wrapping the unpleasant truth up in words. One might as well be honest with people from the outset.

Thank you for asking me to give you my views on this. I should be interested to know what the final result of your deliberations is.



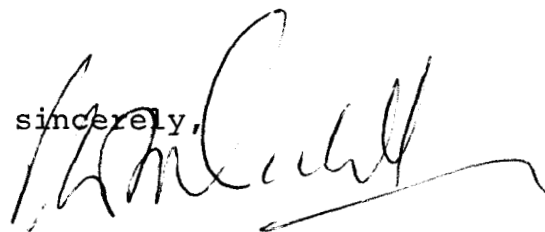
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Ltr., Dr. Varmus  
8/20/85  
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With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. W. Mansell', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter W. A. Mansell, M. D.  
Deputy Department Chairman

PWAM:bg